

Goddard Space Flight Center and Wallops Flight Facility. The House bill cuts 2,000 jobs at Goddard and Wallops. The Senate bill we pass today will save 2,000 jobs at Goddard and Wallops. I fought hard to restore funding for NASA, and I am truly pleased that this bill will save those jobs. NASA is fully funded in this bill, at \$13.5 billion, the same as the President's request. Funding for the space shuttle, space station, and critical science programs are funded at the President's request.

National Service is funded at \$423 million, a slight reduction from last year. I continue to hope that this funding can be increased as we move toward conference. National Service has enrolled over 100,000 members and participants across the country in a wide array of community service programs, including: AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, and the National Senior Service Corps.

With regard to the EPA, the Subcommittee has provided \$7.3 billion in total funding. The Subcommittee increased funding for EPA's core environmental programs: \$825 million for the drinking water state revolving fund, and \$1.3 billion for the clean water revolving fund, including \$5 million for sewer upgrades in Cambridge and Salisbury, Maryland.

Taking care of local communities infrastructure needs has always been a priority for me and this committee. We also provided \$250,000 for a Kempton Mine remediation project. Superfund is funded at \$1.4 billion, down slightly from last year.

I'm especially pleased that we were able to support the President's full request for the Chesapeake Bay Program Office—over \$18 million—for FY 2000. The Chesapeake Bay Program Office is a leader in efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem for future generations. We also increased funding for the Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Program that helps our small communities and prevents runoff and pollution.

FEMA has \$1 billion in the disaster relief fund. The bill we pass today adds \$300 million to the disaster relief fund. This will help people in the Eastern United States who are still dealing with the horrible aftermath of Hurricane Floyd. That is why I'm glad that this bill was passed, and that FEMA will continue to be able to help those who are affected by natural disasters. We will await any further Administration request for disaster assistance in light of Hurricane Floyd.

The National Science Foundation is funded at \$3.9 billion, which is \$250 million more than fiscal year 1999. This funding level will allow us to make critical investments in science and technology into the next century. The funding increase for NSF is an important step for maintaining our science and technology base.

Mr. President, I recognize that there may have been certain provisions in this bill that members may have disagreed with or opposed. I acknowledge

their concerns. But I am very pleased that we worked together to pass this bill today, and I hope we can resolve any outstanding differences as this process continues. I believe the VA/ HUD bill is good for Maryland, good for America, and good for the American people who rely on the programs it funds.

I thank Senator BOND and my colleagues once again for their support for this bill.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I see the distinguished Senator from West Virginia. Does he seek the floor?

Mr. BYRD. Yes.

Mr. STEVENS. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, no Senator in this body exceeds the Senator from West Virginia in his appreciation of the work that the Senator from Alaska does as chairman of the Appropriations Committee. He is an outstanding chairman. I am proud to serve with him. He always works with me in these matters concerning allocations, and I cannot find the words to adequately praise him. He is doing an excellent job. No Senator in this body, including the Senator speaking, could ever be a better chairman of that committee than Senator STEVENS.

I served with a lot of chairmen of that committee over the years, but it is a two-way street. It is a team effort. This Senator contends it will always be that, whether I am ranking member or whether I am the chairman. I try to give my full cooperation to Senator STEVENS. We have never had a difference on the committee, not when I was chairman—he was not the ranking member at that time, but he has done an excellent job. He has seen the need to increase the amount of moneys for veterans' health care, and upon several occasions I have talked with him about the need to increase the amount. I took the lead, inside the committee, in increasing that amount by \$1.1 billion. He fully supported me. It is the chairman, in the main, who decides how much money will be allocated to the various subcommittees. But I believe it is my job as ranking member to work with him. If I have any differences, I let him know, but I have never had any differences with Senator STEVENS.

So I wanted to add my compliments concerning the distinguished Senator. I also want to compliment Senator BOND, again, the chairman of the VA subcommittee, for the excellent work he has done on that subcommittee. I compliment the ranking member, Senator MIKULSKI, for the work she does. When she was chairman of that subcommittee, she was one of the best subcommittee chairmen—I don't say chairperson—she was one of the best chairmen that we had of any subcommittee.

I did not want this day to pass without this lowly ranking member having an opportunity to say some good words about the people who are entitled to

commendation. It doesn't make any difference to me whether they are Republicans or Democrats. If they are entitled to commendation, I give it to them.

So I applaud you, Mr. Chairman, not only for doing a good job but for being the fair and considerate Senator that you are, and also a fair and considerate chairman as well. Again, I have to say some good words about Senator BOND, Senator MIKULSKI. They could not be better. They could not be more fair. They could not be more considerate.

They are hamstrung, as you are, Mr. Chairman, by the fact that we do not have enough money. I am for raising the caps. I am for telling the American people the truth. We need more money. Let's raise those caps. I am not a bit backwards about saying I support raising the caps. We have to meet the people's needs. I hope we will get around to that. I think we are going to have to do that before it is over.

I thank Senators for their patience for listening, but I wanted to get in my two cents' worth of commendations also.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator very much.

Mr. BYRD. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. STEVENS. I am sure Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BOND appreciate those kind words from the Senator from West Virginia as much as I do. I do thank the Senator for his cooperation and willingness to work with me as chairman of this committee. It is a distinct honor to follow him as chairman.

We should mention, on our side, the help of Paul Carliner, Jeannine Schroeder, and Sean Smith, who worked with Senator MIKULSKI. This has been a very fine working team. Senator BOND, Senator MIKULSKI, and the team of both the majority and minority have worked very hard to meet the needs of the agencies and the American people under this bill, under some very difficult circumstances in regard to ceilings and limits under which they had to live. I, again, emphasize the Budget Committee has filed a statement saying this bill is within the budget.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 1402

Mr. STEVENS. I now ask unanimous consent H.R. 1402 be placed on the calendar. That is the class 1 milk structure bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority leader.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, again I thank the members of the VA-HUD appropriations subcommittee and the full committee for their good work. Also, I am pleased we were able to work out an agreement as to how we could proceed for the remainder of the day. We have now completed action on the VA-HUD appropriations bill. The education issue that was being discussed earlier by Senator DASCHLE, Senator GREGG, and Senator KENNEDY, and others who will be commenting in a few minutes, those two issues will be considered back-to-back on Monday.

There will, obviously, be no further votes today. The next votes will occur at 5:30 on Monday. As it now stands, there will be two votes at that time.

The Senate has done good work this week. In addition to completing action on the VA-HUD appropriations bill, after a lot of delay and unnecessary obstruction, in my opinion, we were able to complete the Interior appropriations bill, and we also passed, by an overwhelming vote, the defense authorization conference report for the year—a good bill. Senator WARNER and his Armed Services Committee members, Senator THURMOND, Senator LEVIN, did an excellent job on that bill. I certainly expect and hope the President will sign the defense authorization conference report and, hopefully, the Interior Committee conference will get underway on Monday, and the VA-HUD conference as well.

That leaves only one appropriations bill to be considered in the Senate before all 13 of them will be completed. I believe we are well ahead of where we have been in many years in getting that done. It is actually possible that we could get the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill up by Tuesday or Wednesday of next week and either complete it before the end of the fiscal year or within a day of that, and then, of course, go to conference.

Will it be easy? No. I am sure it is going to be an interesting debate, but that is as it should be. I look forward to completing that work and moving forward with the appropriations conference reports. I hope there will be one or two conference reports that might be available on Monday. Whenever they become available, we will consider them that day or the next day. Energy and water is close to being completed, I believe, and Agriculture is still in the mill. We hope to get those done.

I do want to emphasize that I think the way we worked out handling this education issue is much better than having it on the VA-HUD appropriations bill. It does not relate to the VA-HUD bill. I did not think it should have been offered on that appropriations bill, even though it was offered as a sense of the Senate. It is better to handle it the way we have agreed to do it.

Senator DASCHLE seemed to question whether we intended to go to the

Labor-HHS appropriations bill. I have been saying for weeks we intend to do it. As soon as the committee reports it out, we will have it on the floor as soon as the rules allow. I have been saving next week for its consideration. Education amendments, I am sure, will be offered next week when this bill is considered in the Senate.

REAUTHORIZING THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I want to comment a bit about education. First, let me lay down a predicate about myself. I feel very strongly about the need for quality, safe, and drug-free education in America. We have lost our edge in education. Our kids are not getting as good an education as they should. In fact, I do not think they are getting as good an education as we were getting in the fifties and sixties. There has unfortunately been a steady decline in our schools. While some schools are doing a little better and some scores are, in many areas our schools are not what they should be.

I said three things: Quality, safe, drug-free schools. We have a lot of work to do in these areas.

I will not stand second to any Member of the Senate when it comes to feeling strongly about education and advocating on behalf of education, but it has to be done in the right way.

What has happened is the education establishment is firmly entrenched in the status quo. They believe that we should stay in this box, and we should not change it and, by the way, it should be run from Washington. That is not the answer, in my opinion.

I want to make this clear: While I think we should have choice in education, I am a product of public education from the first grade through the second, third, and fourth grades where I went to school at Duck Hill, MS, and I had better teachers in the second, third, and fourth grades in Duck Hill, MS, than I had the rest of my life. They were probably better than most people have had in these very fancy and better funded schools. Those teachers loved their students. They worked hard and taught us the basics. I have never forgotten them, and I appreciate what they did.

I went to public school all the way through college and law school. So did my wife, so did my son, and so did my daughter. So when some Senators get up and pontificate that we cannot allow students to have choice, that we have to save public education—let me be clear, I want public education. I want every student, regardless of religion, income level, race, sex, or anything else, to get a good education. But the tragedy is that that may not always be in a particular school. If a public school in your neighborhood is not doing the job, you ought to be able to leave.

Some people say if that happens, the bad schools will fail. Right. It is called

competition. Produce, give quality education, drug-free and safe, or get out of the business.

To tell students—intelligent students, needy students, poor students—they have to go to this school no matter what is wrong. Why is it in America that our elementary and secondary education is ranked 17th in the world and yet our higher education is No. 1 in the world? What is the difference? Why are we doing so poorly at the elementary and secondary level and doing so well in higher education?

There are a couple of simple answers. First of all, when you finish high school, rich or poor, whatever State you live in, you have a choice: You can go to work if you have had vocational education in high school, or you can go to additional training. You can go to a community college, you can go to a State university, you can go to a parochial college, you can go out of State, you can go to Harvard. You get to choose what fits your needs. But in elementary and secondary education, oh, no, you have to do it the way we tell you in this box. No choice. That is one problem.

The second problem is financial support. I am from a poor, blue-collar family. When I was in college, I worked and got a loan which, by the way, I paid back 1 year after I graduated. I could not have made it, though, if I had not been able to work for the university and get loans.

In America—and I hope every student in America and every parent hears me now—in America, when every child finishes high school, they can get a college education. No doubt about it. Some people say: I come from a family with no money. Hey, I was in a family with no money. At one point, I had no family. But I got a loan. Other students can get a grant or a supplemental grant or a State scholarship, a private scholarship. The financial aid is there. Every student can get an education in America.

There is financial aid when you go to college but not when you are in elementary and secondary school. Senator COVERDELL wants to remedy that. He wants to allow parents to save for their children's education so that the financial support will be there to choose a different school if you want to, to help you with the books, to help you get a computer, to help you get a uniform if that is what you need—choice and financial opportunity.

I want to add this: I am the son of a schoolteacher, and I still act like one sometimes. At times, my staff brings in a letter which has bad grammar. I feel a little guilty, but I start marking on it: This is surplus language; this is not correct grammar.

My mother taught for 19 years. So I care about education. I worked for 3 years of my life at the University of Mississippi. I worked in the placement office helping students get jobs when they graduated, and I worked in the financial aid office. I was the one who